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**REFLECTIONS OF THE ITALIAN ASSOCIATION OF VICTIMS OF TERRORISM ON THE
BOOK “ANATOMY OF THE RED BRIGADES”**

For the terrorist, “shedding blood is, first of all, a story, a way of reporting the facts,” the fruit of that educational process called “the pedagogy of intolerance.” This is the concept behind Alessandro Orsini’s **Anatomy of the Red Brigades: The Religious Mind-Set of Modern Terrorists** (Cornell University Press, 2011).

It was this analysis of the pedagogy of intolerance that led to our Association inviting Alessandro Orsini to the European Conference dedicated to the perspectives of the accounts of victims of terrorism, organized in Turin in November, 2011. Accounts, those of the victims, which, despite being the result of painful events, focus entirely upon the pedagogy of tolerance, as does all the literature produced by their testimonies.

On the occasion of the recent Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Terrorism held in Brussels, referring to the studies of Alessandro Orsini, it was reiterated that victims can play a role in fighting the cultural processes of violent radicalization which lead to terrorism - the role of the witness who, when asked, describes events whose ethical aspect supersedes the ideological value which occasioned them.

Alessandro Orsini dissects and analyses the roots of the political ideology of the Red Brigades. Even in a context of academic study, his talent is that of describing everything with great clarity, producing an analysis executed in a plain language which avoids any erudite intellectualism, to the point that it has been accused – by an unrepentant Red Brigades murderer – of “*lacking any sophisticated intellectual analysis.*”

What some diehard terrorists consider a fault is, for us, one of the greatest advantages of *Anatomy of the Red Brigades*: a text praised for its scientific value by the leading experts on terrorism and security studies – such as Bruce Hoffman, Lawrence D. Freedman, John Horgan – which can be read without difficulty by today’s young people, showing how sociology and history can work together, enriching one another in the process.

These considerations lead us to say that we would like to see *Anatomy of the Red Brigades* by Alessandro Orsini used profitably in Italian schools.

The book has at least two further merits. The first is that of showing the killing power of Red Brigade ideology based on the dehumanization of the Red Brigades’ political enemies, a process which occurs within a psychological power, an emotional force field, called “the revolutionary sect.” The second is its timeliness. The book closes with a chapter devoted to the right-wing “Black Brigades” of the Seventies, but we are sure it can facilitate the understanding of terrorism as a cultural phenomenon even in its new modern forms, namely those that stretch their tragic and criminal reach into our daily lives.

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